

## Phomopsis canker and twig blight

*Phomopsis vaccinii* (fungus)

Phomopsis canker and twig blight occurs in most blueberry-growing regions.

**Symptoms.** A typical symptom is sudden wilting and death (flagging) of canes during the growing season. A sunken or flattened area (canker) is often present at the base of the cane.



Brown, spreading lesions develop on green stems and twigs, which are

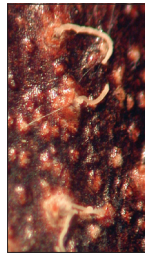
eventually killed. Twig lesions may originate from infected buds. Leaf spots are rare.



Flagging of canes (left); canker (right).

**Disease cycle.** The fungus overwinters in infected canes and twigs. In the spring, spores are dispersed from fruiting bodies (pycnidia) by rain. The fungus is active from bud swell until after harvest. Wounding (e.g., by harvesting equipment) and freeze injury may predispose plants to infection.

Young lesions (left) are brown and become bleached (middle) as they age. Fruiting bodies (right) develop in the bleached areas.



Above, spores ooze out of fruiting bodies.

# Phomopsis canker and twig blight – *continued*

**Management.** Prune out infected canes; avoid wounding the canes; plant resistant cultivars; limit overhead irrigation; apply effective fungicides.



Leaf spots caused by *Phomopsis vaccinii*.



Fruit cluster collapsing due to twig blight.

Fruit infection leads to white mold growth and soft fruit which split when squeezed.

